



Southeast News

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S-E Conference, Christian Church in Georgia Hold "Conversations"

On September 12 representatives from the Southeast Conference and the Christian Church in Georgia (Disciples of Christ) met together in Central Congregational Church, UCC in Atlanta to explore, on a local level, the possibility and feasibility of a proposed national merger between the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

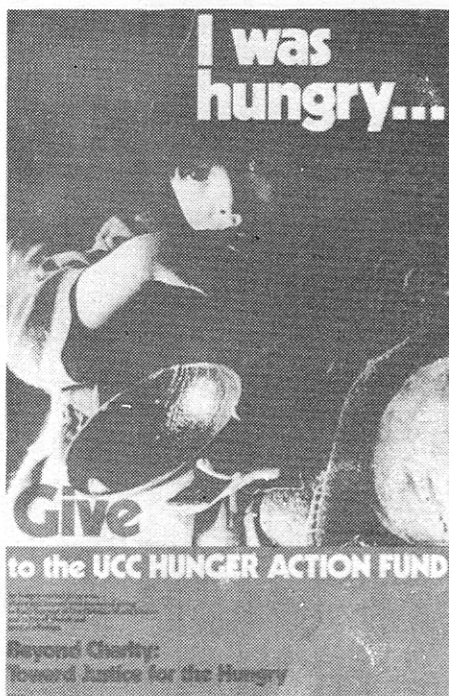
Similar meetings are being held throughout the United States in response to mandates passed by the national bodies of each of the two denominations. At the Eleventh General Synod of the UCC, held this past summer, a resolution calling for conversations between Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) and the United Church of Christ to explore the possibility of Union between the two denominations was enthusiastically adopted. The two churches have had off and on conversations concerning merger since 1911 and are already co-operating together at many national levels.

The September 12 meeting was attended by some 24 representatives of the two denominations. Chaired by Dr. David Beebe, Moderator of the SEC, Conference Minister W.J. Andes was present as were Rev. E. Lyle Harvey, Regional Minister, and Dr. George Wascovich, Moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Georgia.

In addition to fostering fellowship and opening the lines of communication between representatives of the two denominations, the meeting served to explore basic similarities and differences between the two Churches. While both denominations are very similar in their congregational forms of government, further conversations will need to discuss differences in the approach to and practice of baptism and communion, as well as solutions to the complicated proceedings of merging such legal entities as the minister's pension funds.

While the meeting resulted in discussion

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HALF-A-BILLION PERSONS FACE HUNGER

While world food-production is up, there are nevertheless a half-billion persons faced with food shortages, malnutrition, or starvation — hunger — today. A new Guide for Local Church Hunger Action, distributed to U.C.C. congregations this month as part of the Hunger Action Fund Packet, region by region, outlines a four-week Hunger Action Program which can be used by congregations large or small. The program is based on the six goals adopted by the Tenth General Synod in response to the world food crisis and reaffirmed by the Eleventh General Synod this summer: consciousness-raising, life-style modification, citizen-action, fund-raising, resource-allocation, and theological and ethical studies. The Guide, in addition, reports on the 1976 Hunger Action Fund and lists Hunger Action resources which are currently available.

Congregations are urged to engage in the four-week Hunger Action Program this fall. The theme suggested for Hunger Action programs this year is "I was hungry . . ." (Matthew 25:35). A poster, featuring this theme, and an order card for materials are included in the Hunger Action Fund Packet.

17/76 UPDATE

The Southeast Conference has now surpassed the \$50,000 level of giving to the 17/76 Achievement Fund Campaign. The time to relax, however, is not yet with us.

Total SEC 17/76 giving reached \$53,263 as of September 15, 1977 with many churches having already fulfilled or exceeded their goals. This total represents the attainment of 70% of the conference pledge of \$76,000.

Time is hurrying onward, however, and \$22,500 is still needed to complete our pledge by this coming June. There are 19 churches participating in the program of which six have reached or exceeded their pledges. Several others are very close.

A special commendation should be extended to Pleasant Hill's Community Church whose 17/76 giving has now exceeded the \$10,000 mark! Their contributions have been as faithful and regular as they have been generous. This brings them to 94% of their pledged amount and no one is doubting that they will go the final mile. We congratulate them on their record of exemplary stewardship.

Scott A. Baker
Administrative Assistant

Uplands: Mission in Action

Uplands Retirement Center in Pleasant Hill, Tennessee is a familiar name to a good many people in the Southeast Conference. It is a name that means a retirement community for some 165 persons — a name connected with an excellent nursing home, with clinic services, with home health care and with a thrift shop through which clothing is distributed.

But what most people don't know about Uplands Retirement Center is the degree to which it has provided free services to those in need. In a report written this past June, Rev. Edward Dahmer, Executive Director of Uplands, writes: "In the nine months of the current fiscal year, we have provided \$19,000 of free service to persons who simply were not able to pay the total cost themselves, and by the end of our fiscal year, we will have given about

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Dr. and Mrs. Marion Mansell

Dr. Mansell to Be Installed

The official installation of Dr. Marion Mansell as the minister of the Fairfield Glade Community Church, Fairfield Glade, Tennessee, will be held at 7:00 p.m. on Sunday, October 2, 1977.

An exciting venture in ecumenical relations, the Fairfield Glade Church is inter-denominational and will be sponsored by three denominations: the United Church of Christ, the United Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church. The installation will be performed by representatives from all three denominations.

Prior to accepting the pastorate at Fairfield Glade, the Rev. Dr. Mansell had served for 35 years as the Executive of the Synod of Mid-South, United Presbyterian Church. During his tenure in that position he was active in the ecumenical movement, provided leadership for the Morgan-Scott Project and was instrumental in the development of the Fairfield Glade Church. Dr. Mansell and his wife, Lillie-Mae, an active youth worker, presently reside in Rockwood. Dr. Mansell has been granted Dual Standing in the UCC and will maintain his ministerial standing in the United Presbyterian Church.

The Fairfield Glade Community Church has now been accepted by all three sponsoring denominations and will rotate judicatory participation on a regular basis. The pastorate of the church will be open to candidates from all three sponsoring denominations.

With some sixty members at present, the Church holds its services of worship in the Fireside Room of the Fairfield Glade Country Club.

SE CONFERENCE DELEGATE REFLECTS ON GENERAL SYNOD

One of the Southeast Conference delegates to the Eleventh General Synod of the United Church of Christ, held in Washington, D.C. July 1-5, was Mrs. Phemie Young, a member of Pilgrim Congregational Church, U.C.C. in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Concerning her experiences at Synod, Mrs. Young files the following report:

How shall I describe it? As a delegate from the Southeast Conference, I tried to become a part of the experience as fully as I could. At times I felt the lack of the group solidarity and fellowship of the larger conference delegations. But, overall, there was a sense of being one of a worshipping, caring body that was ready to deal with whatever the individual churches, instrumentalities, or world crises had to raise for consideration.

And there was so much to consider! The ninety or more overtures, resolutions, or pronouncements were assigned to divisions (groups of delegates) for refinement of wording, combination of ideas, and other improvement before coming to the floor of the plenary sessions. There the discussion was open to all delegates. There were: disagreement without acrimony, some verbosity, touches of humor and pathos, and a final note that seemed to reflect a real thinning-through of the issues. The sensational newspaper reports picked up, in a slanted and sometimes incorrect way, only a small portion of the action.

There were high moments of worship, concerted action for social concern, and intellectual stimulation that lifted the

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Pilgrim Church, B'ham, "Adopts" Missionary

Would you like to raise the consciousness of your congregation concerning the foreign missionary program of the United Church of Christ? Well, then, why not "adopt" a missionary — Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC in Birmingham did!

Following the visit of Dr. Paul Gregory, a Missionary-in-residence in the spring of 1976, Birmingham Pilgrim decided to "adopt" one of our foreign missionaries. With the aid of the Board for World Ministries, the church decided to adopt Miss Faye Edwards of Meridian, Miss., who has been appointed principal of the American Academy for Girls in Uskudar, Turkey. Offering eight years of study, the Academy also seeks to break through the centuries of misunderstandings between Christianity and Islam and to facilitate social progress in all levels of Turkish life.

On Sunday, June 26, Miss Edwards was a special guest of Birmingham Pilgrim, preaching at the morning service of worship. Now that the members of Birmingham Pilgrim have met Miss Edwards, they will support her ministry and follow her career with real interest!

"Conversations" . . .

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that was tentative and initial in tone, the response from the participants was one of enthusiasm. A subsequent meeting has been planned and will be held at a Christian (Disciples) church in Atlanta.

Due to the density of Christian (Disciples) churches in the southeast and the large geographical area of the Southeast Conference, UCC, the SEC will conduct official local conversations through the Georgia Assembly (or Conference) of Christian Churches. Both judicatories share regional offices in Georgia. SEC churches outside of Georgia, though, are encouraged to contact Christian (Disciples) churches in their locality.

Upland . . .

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\$25,000 in free service. We accept this as a part of our Christian calling and responsibility and we shall continue it as long as it is possible for us to do it and so long as continue to get the support of concerned churches and individuals.

Can your church help support the ministry and mission of Uplands Retirement Center? For further information write: Rev. Edward Dahmer, Uplands, Inc., Pleasant Hill, TN 38578.

What Is the Potential for a Van Ministry?

Recently, a local church of the SEC surveyed all their activities in which a VAN could be used should that church purchase a van. An abbreviated list is as follows:

YOUTH — Movies, camping, day camp, Six Flags, Christmas carolling, district youth rallies, sports — basketball, football, softball, ice skating, bowling, swimming, visits to shut-ins, service projects.

SENIOR CITIZENS — Regular luncheons, and outings, special study groups, special night services, attendance at funerals, pick-up Sunday morning, picnics, historical tours, programs at other churches.

CONFIRMATION CLASS — Visit Conference offices, joint tours with confirmands from other UCC churches.

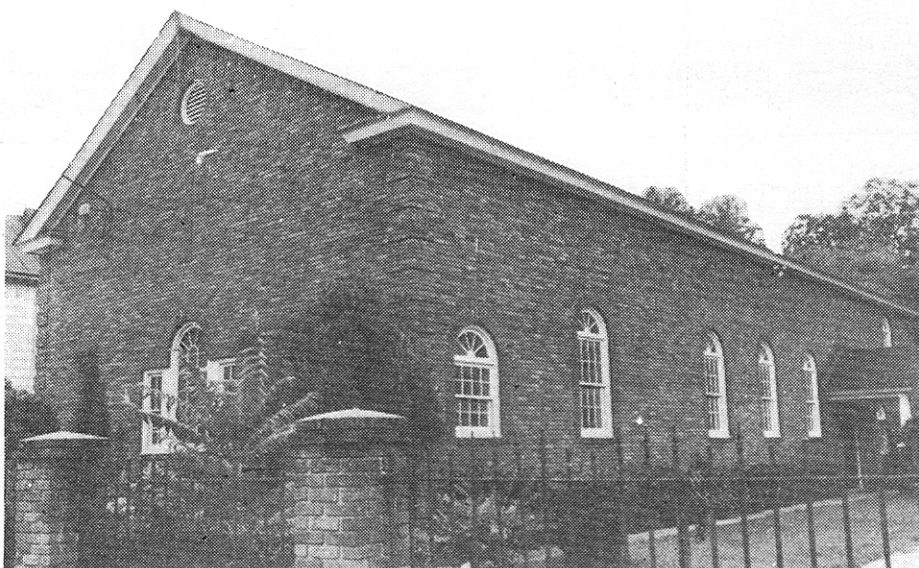
COMMITTEE USE — Workshops, Long Range study.

WOMEN'S GUILD — Pick up members for meeting, district meetings, picnics, haul used clothing, service projects.

CHURCHMEN'S FELLOWSHIP — District meetings, softball games, service projects, regular meetings.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES — Outings, picnics, parties, service to local nursing homes.

VACATION CHURCH SCHOOL — Interest trips, pick up and return of children and teachers.



Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC in Charleston, S.C.

Around the Conference; Introducing Plymouth, UCC, Charleston, S. C.

From the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River, from the Gulf of Mexico to the mountains of Kentucky, the Southeast Conference covers a broad expanse of territory. Contained within her boundaries are some 120 churches — widely dispersed — widely diverse in heritage and religious expression — and yet united in the conviction that the churches of Jesus Christ "may all be one."

Representing the strength of this conviction and the rich heritage which our churches lend to the Southeast Conference is Plymouth Congregational Church, UCC in Charleston, South Carolina.

One of the older churches in the Conference, Plymouth traces its origins to the year 1867 when the church was officially organized with some 128 members who transferred their membership from Circular Congregational Church. Destroyed in 1861 as a result of the war, Circular Church was a large congregation composed of both white and Negro members.

In 1872 Plymouth erected its first church building. In subsequent years, the church has relocated on two occasions and is now housed in its present building at 124 Spring Street in Charleston.

Continuing its close ties with the American Missionary Association, Plymouth enjoyed some eleven different pastorates between 1884 and 1946. During this time the church flourished in both size and mission. The church established the Trade Street Mission, which later became the Battery Congregational Church, both has since closed its doors.

After four difficult years in which

Plymouth was unable to secure adequate leadership, the church called in 1949 the Rev. John T. Enwright who initiated a new chapter in Plymouth's ministry through his 25 years of service ending at his death in 1975. During Rev. Enwright's pastorate, the church was moved to its present location and a renewed and vigorous ministry was undertaken. With some 120 members, Plymouth is under the leadership of the Rev. James R. Fields who was ordained in January of this year: the 17th pastor of Plymouth Congregational Church, United Church of Christ.

Membership Information Exchange Initiated

Twenty thousand U.C.C. members move their place of residence every year! Now, a United Church of Christ family that moves will be contacted by a U.C.C. pastor within thirty days of arrival in its new neighborhood. This contact will result from a new experimental Membership Exchange Program. The Membership Exchange plan will be initiated by the local pastor from whose parish the family has moved and will be set in motion by a standard information postcard sent by the pastor to the Conference Office serving the family's new community.

SE Conference . . .

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Synod above a mere business meeting. The leadership was representative of clergy and laity, male and female, majority and minority groups and was competent and articulate.

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Church Without a Building

Have you ever encountered a church without a building? You will probably answer, "not likely." But just such a church is applying for standing in the Alabama-Tennessee Association of the Southeast Conference. Located in the new community of Fairfield Glade, Tennessee, the church is appropriately named "Fairfield Glade Community Church." Without a building of its own, the "church" meets in a hall of one of the community's buildings.

It was to this situation and toward an understanding of what the Church was intended to be, that the Rev. Dr. Lee Gable addressed the congregation of the Fairfield Glade Community Church in his final sermon as the interim co-paster of the church.

In part, Rev. Gable observed: "If there is one symbol that should guide Fairfield Glade Community Church over the years, it might well be the body of Christ. One of your basic decisions has been to be a church without a building. That sets you apart from most churches. For many people, the clearest symbol of a church is its building. . . with its tower, cross, stained glass windows, and an outside bulletin board. These make it 'look like' a church. You have made a different decision. People are to be the symbol of this church, and that means each of you individually, and all of you together. Some people will ask you from time to time, 'When are you going to build a church of your own?' You have decided to be a church, not to build a church. The verse of scripture which brings this understanding of the church into sharp focus is found in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians in which we read: 'Now you are Christ's body, and each of you a limb or organ of it.'"

SUNDAY SCHOOL RECORDS

Cullman, St. John's: Fifty five members of St. John's United Church have received 1976-77 Sunday School Attendance Awards, including two persons who received awards for over twenty years of faithful presence. Specifically, Mr. Freida Seckfort received his 23 year bar and Mrs. Evelyn Richter a 27 year bar. All of these children, youth, and adults deserve commendation for their outstanding record.

NEWS & NOTES

Margaret (Peg) Blemker, Near East Secretary of the United Church Board for World Ministries, was a visitor to Pleasant Hill, TN on September 2. In addition to seeing friends, the official aspect to Ms. Blemker's visit was to give special recognition to the nine persons in Pleasant Hill who have given 25 or more years of service overseas, as missionaries of the Board.

Howard Congregational Church, UCC in Nashville, TN held a "student recognition day" on August 21 in which 32 students from first grade through graduate school were recognized.

Some 200 persons attended the Homecoming service of Lanett Congregational-Christian Church, UCC, Lanett, AL on Sunday morning, August 28. Rev. Walter Hall preached the sermon. The Lanett Revival services, held August 28 - September 2, were well attended and featured Rev. Terry Clark as the speaker.

In addition to numerous other needs, the

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Morgan-Scott Project reports that bicycles are needed for transportation for boys and girls. The bike shop needs repairable bikes for youngsters who would otherwise have no transportation.

St. John's UCC in Cullman, AL reports that 46 of its young people are presently enrolled in college. Some 14 colleges are represented.

On August 7 two young men, Greg Clemmons and Dwight Kelley of St. John's Church, Cullman, AL, conducted the service of worship at the Mountain Grove Congregational-Christian Church in Hanceville, AL.

Visiting Pleasant Hill Community Church, where he was ordained in 1945, were Dr. and Mrs. Drake. Dr. Drake now serves as Headmaster of an institution in Boston serving 280 children with learning disabilities.

Rev. Wayne Peck, former Director of Uplands, was married on September 3 to Marilyn Stanton Malone in the Derry Presbyterian Church, Hershey, Pa. The couple will reside in Hershey.

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New Conversations is a magazine about the United Church of Christ — its history, present struggles and future vision. Three issues for \$5.00 — write: "New Conversations", United Church Board for Homeland Ministries, 287 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010.

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